

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 11130 220827Z

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INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11130

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IN, SK

SUBJ: SIKKIM; THE CHOGYAL VISITS DELHI

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING A FOUR DAY VISIT TO DELHI, THE CHOGYAL COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON THE AGITATION IN SIKKIM THIS SPRING AND SIKKIM'S TIES WITH INDIA. THE INDIANS SEEM TO BE HAVING DIFFICULTY FINDING A GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE FORMULA FOR SIKKIM'S ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, FOR WHICH A DATE HAS NOT YET BEEN SET.
END SUMMARY

1. THE CHOGYAL VISITED DELHI SEPTEMBER 17-20 ON HIS FIRST TRIP SINCE THE MARCH-APRIL AGITATION LED TO COMPLETE INDIAN TAKEOVER OF SIKKIM'S ADMINISTRATION AND TO THE MAY 8 AGREEMENT BY INDIA, THE CHOGYAL, AND SIKKIMESE POLITICAL PARTIES ON A NEW POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. DURING HIS STAY, HE MET WITH MRS GANDHI, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY.

2. THE CHOGYAL MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS AT A SEPTEMBER 19 PRESS CONFERENCE:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 11130 220827Z

(A) RECENT AGITATION IN SIKKIM WAS NOT SPONTANEOUS; COMMUNIST

PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST) AND OTHER DEMONSTRATORS CAME IN FROM DARJEELING AND KALIMPONG TO STIR UP TROUBLE; AGITATION WAS NOT INSPIRED BY CHINA OR NEPAL.

(B) HE HAD FULL FAITH AND TRUST IN INDIA; CRITICISM THAT HE HAD BEEN LOOKING MORE TO THE WEST AND THE US THAN TO INDIA FOR GUIDANCE WAS ABSOLUTE NONSENSE.

(C) THE GYALMO HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN POLITICS; HER DEPARTURE WAS NOT PROMPTED BY POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS OR FAMILY MISUNDERSTANDINGS; HE PLANNED TO JOIN HER IN NEW YORK AT CHRISTMAS.

(D) THE MAY 8 AGREEMENT WAS ONLY A WORKING ARRANGEMENT; IT DID NOT SUPERSEDE THE 1950 TREATY WHICH, ALONG WITH THE LETTERS EXCHANGED AT THAT TIME, CONTINUED TO GOVERN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND SIKKIM.

(E) INDIA'S CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER, WHO RECENTLY VISITED SIKKIM, WAS TRYING TO WORK OUT A FORMULA FOR ELECTIONS TO THE NEW ASSEMBLY THAT WOULD RECONCILE THE ONE MAN-ONE VOTE PRINCIPLE OF THE MAY 8 AGREEMENT AND WHAT THE CHOGYAL TERMED "PARITY" OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS.

3. THE BRITISH TOLD US THEIR HIGH COMMISSIONER GATHERED FROM TALKS WITH THE INDIAN POLITICAL OFFICER IN SIKKIM, WHO ACCOMPANIED THE CHOGYAL, AND THE INDIAN ELECTION COMMISSIONER, THAT THEY HAD NOT YET SUCCEEDED IN COMING UP WITH A GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE FORMULA FOR THE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHEN THE ELECTIONS CALLED FOR IN THE MAY 8 AGREEMENT MIGHT BE HELD. THE POLITICAL OFFICER SAID SIKKIM WAS QUIET--EVEN BORING, AND INDICATED HE WOULD WELCOME VISITS BY BRITISH AND OTHER DIPLOMATS.

4. COMMENT: WE TAKE THE CHOGYAL'S TRIP AND THE PUBLICITY THE INDIANS PERMITTED HIM AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE GOI'S DESIRE TO PRESERVE HIS FIGUREHEAD STATUS IN SIKKIM. WE DOUBT THAT THE GOI SHARES HIS VIEWS ON THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF THE MAY 8 AGREEMENT WHICH SO CLEARLY SPELLS OUT INDIA'S EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY IN SIKKIM. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GOI, WHICH IS STUCK WITH THE TASK OF FINDING AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULA FOR THE ASSEMBLY

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 NEW DE 11130 220827Z

ELECTIONS, MAY HAVE BEEN SATISFIED TO LET THE CHOGYAL FLOAT THE IDEA OF "PARITY" BETWEEN THE NEPALI MAJORITY AND THE LEPCHA/BHUTIA MINORITY.

5. AT THE TIME OF THE MAY 8 AGREEMENT THE INDIANS MADE MUCH OF HAVING MET "POPULAR" DEMANDS FOR ONE MAN-ONE VOTE IN SIKKIM. HOWEVER, MILITANT SIKKIMESE-NEPALI YOUTH, WHOSE LEADER REFUSED TO INITIAL THE AGREEMENT, SUSPECTED ITS PRO-

VISIONS ON ENSURING NO SECTION OF THE POPULATION ACQUIRED
A DOMINATE POSITION MEANT THAT NEPALIS WOULD NOT GET A
MAJORITY IN THE NEW ASSEMBLY. SINCE THIS WAS ONE OF THEIR
MINIMAL DEMANDS, THE INDIANS MAY BE CHARGED WITH A SELL-
OUT IF THEY ADOPT A PARITY FORMULA. BUT OF COURSE, WHAT-
EVER THE FORMULA, THE ASSEMBLY'S POWERS WILL BE NOMINAL
AND THE GOI WILL REMAIN THE EFFECTIVE AUTHORITY IN SIKKIM.
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